



# News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal  
5150 Florida Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

---

---

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: "[www.dps.state.la.us/sfm/](http://www.dps.state.la.us/sfm/)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RELEASE NUMBER: 0001-051501-19  
DATE: May 15, 2001

CONTACT: MARC REECH  
504-925-4911  
1-800-256-5452

## **PLUG INTO ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

### **Fire Marshal Urges Citizens to Check Their Homes for Electrical Hazards**

**BATON ROUGE** – State Fire Marshal V. J. Bella is urging citizens to look for and correct electrical safety hazards in their homes. Each year, incidents involving electrical equipment, such as extension cords, outlets and light bulbs, result in more than 41,000 residential fires that claim about 350 lives and cause over 1,400 injuries. These fires also cause more than \$620 million in property damage annually.

“Simply removing electrical cords from under rugs could help prevent many house fires,” said Fire Marshal Bella. “Many of these electrical-related fires are preventable. If every household installed ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), deaths and injury from electrocution in and around the home could be significantly reduced. I urge citizens to look around their homes and correct electrical hazards that they find.”

Citizens can help protect themselves from electrical hazards by taking a few minutes to check their homes for unsafe conditions:

- Make sure electrical cords are in good condition. A frayed or cracked cord could cause a shock or fire. Replace old and damaged extension cords with new ones having the certification label of an independent testing laboratory on the cord.
- Make sure that extension cords are not overloaded, as indicated by the rating labeled on the cord and appliance. Overloaded cords can cause fires. Change the cord to one that has a higher rating, or unplug some appliances. Remember that extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis and are not intended to serve as permanent household wiring.
- To reduce the risks of electric shock, make sure that GFCI protection is provided for outlets at kitchen counters, in bathrooms, and at outdoor receptacles. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working properly.
- Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures and lamps to make sure they are the correct wattage. Replace bulbs that have a higher wattage than recommended to prevent overheating that could lead to a fire.
- Check to see that fuses are the correct size for the circuit. Replacing a correct size fuse with a larger size fuse can present a serious fire hazard.
- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you a shock, unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.
- Check to see if outlets and switches are unusually warm or hot to the touch. If so, an unsafe wiring condition could exist. Do not use the outlet or switch and have a qualified electrician check the wiring as soon as possible.

\*\*\* END END END \*\*\*